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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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19 July 1950

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Korean Situation

I. Military Situation.

Although the full-in combat operations in the Taejon area has continued during the past 24 hours, there has been considerable enemy movement in both the undefended west coast sector and the vital corridors in the center of the Korean peninsula which lead south to the main rail line at Kumchon and Taegu. Meanwhile, the US 1st Cavalry Division successfully completed its landing at Pohang on the east coast, while carrier aircraft from the landing support force struck hard at airfields and installations north of the 38th Parallel.

Enemy activity in the Taejon area, where the US 24th Division and the Southern First Corps are fighting delaying actions, has been restricted to minor infiltration and redeployment. Although one northern company has been reported in Taejon, there is no indication that the city has fallen. Meanwhile, units of the enemy 4th Division are reported in occupation of several towns west of Taejon, although this movement may precede an enemy attempt to outflank Taejon from the west and south, this rich southwestern area is virtually undefended and these small enemy forces may instead continue to move south in an attempt to secure rich rice country between Iri and the port of Mokpo.

In the central sector, elements of the Northern 5th and 15th Divisions pushed further south toward Hanchang and Andong, while Yechon is believed to have fallen to the enemy 5th Division. US aerial observers report a continuing buildup of enemy tanks, trucks, and troops in the rear of this sector and other major enemy elements are probably moving into position to support the drive south. Meanwhile, on the east coast, Southern troops attacked and forced an enemy withdrawal north of Yongdok.

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US carrier aircraft, striking east coast targets north of the 38th Parallel, destroyed 14 and damaged 13 enemy aircraft on the ground, damaged power stations, and destroyed one railroad bridge, a coal train, and five oil storage tanks at Wonsan. Other US aircraft attacked enemy Yak 9s engaged in strafing in southern Korea, destroying three and damaging one.

II. Other Developments.

Past failure of the Republic of Korea to win the support of its restless student class may lie behind reports that over 50% of Seoul's students are actively aiding the Communist invaders, with many voluntarily enlisting in the Northern Army. Apparently attracted by the glamor of a winning army, the morale of these recruits may suffer rapidly if the going gets tough. Among other elements of Seoul's population, the working class generally supports the Northern Koreans, while merchants are neutral and the intelligentsia continue to be pro-Southern. A former Seoul policeman reports that North Korean troops and police are rather inconspicuous in Seoul. Commercially, the city is nearly "dead"; stores are closed except for two department stores and some greengrocers. The streets, however, are crowded, especially with youths engaging in Communist demonstrations.

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